

New Hampshire's Clean School Bus Initiative

For School Superintendents

As you may know, for the past two years the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) and the New Hampshire School Transportation Association (NHSTA) have been working together to protect school children and bus drivers from excessive exposure to diesel exhaust from school buses. Exhaust from diesel engines can negatively impact the health of students, drivers, school personnel, and the general public.

To date, this effort has focused largely on eliminating unnecessary school bus idling. In addition to implementing anti-idling policies, there are many things - from installing retrofits to procuring cleaner fuels - that school administrators and school bus fleet managers can do to reduce school bus exhaust and protect the health of the school community. (See reverse.)

How are children affected by diesel exhaust?

Air pollution from diesel vehicles poses a health risk for everyone, but children are more susceptible to this pollution because they breathe at a faster rate than adults. Children's lungs are still developing, and children are more likely to play actively outdoors. Exposure to diesel exhaust can cause lung damage and respiratory problems and can aggravate asthma and existing allergies. Today's high asthma rates indicate a continued need to reduce children's exposure to air pollution and diesel exhaust.



What is government doing?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is working to reduce pollution from new diesel buses by requiring them to meet increasingly tougher emission standards. More stringent standards for new buses took effect in 2004 and will tighten again in 2007. These standards won't apply to existing buses, however, and school buses can be in operation for 20 to 30 years. Without special action, it will take many years before new buses meeting the new pollution limits dominate our school bus fleet.

To help clean up existing fleets, a growing number of school districts are interested in retrofitting their fleets with pollution control technology. EPA recently awarded a \$100,000 demonstration grant to DES to retrofit at least 45 school buses in Manchester and Nashua with special control equipment called diesel oxidation catalysts. The grant was awarded to DES in partnership with the Manchester School District, Nashua School District, Manchester Transit Authority, and First Student of Nashua. This retrofit project will result in significant reductions in small particle pollution and toxic emissions. It is hoped that this grant will demonstrate the feasibility of such retrofit projects and assist school districts in obtaining retrofit equipment as cost effectively as possible.



Dashboard Magnet for Participating Drivers

Does your school system have an anti-idling policy in place?

New Hampshire's school bus drivers have made the anti-idling campaign a five star success! Over 35 school bus fleets have signed on to the anti-idling campaign, representing 70% of the drivers throughout the state. According to participating fleet managers, bus drivers have reduced idling time by an average of 20 minutes per bus per day since the anti-idling campaign began two years ago.



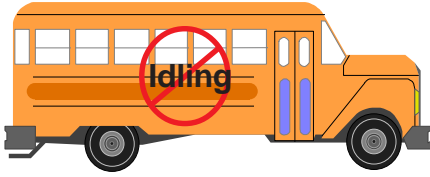
Congressman Bradley and Senator Sununu join EPA Administrator Robert Varney in presenting grant award to Nashua and Manchester officials.

School Administrators Make A Difference!

Here's How You Can Help Reduce Air Pollution

No-Idling Tips for Schools - Improve Air Quality and Save Money!

Idling school buses pollute the air that children breathe. Pollutants can accumulate inside the bus and outdoors near the bus. Exhaust from idling engines may also enter school buildings through ventilation systems, affecting indoor air quality as well. Drivers may occasionally need to let their engines idle briefly to warm the engine or run equipment like defrosters, but most idling is not necessary. Eliminating unnecessary idling is a simple, cost-effective way to help reduce children's exposure to air pollution. Here's how:



- Ensure that your school bus fleet manager has an anti-idling policy in place and that drivers are informed of the policy.
- Make sure that drivers turn buses off as soon as they arrive at loading or unloading areas and refrain from restarting buses until they are ready to depart.
- Post signs in the school yard bus loading and unloading areas to remind drivers to turn engines off (see sign at right). These signs can be posted in parent drop off areas as well. They are 12 by 18 inch metal signs and are available from the N.H. Department of Environmental Services (DES) **free of charge!**
- Provide a space inside the schools during colder months where drivers and students can wait if they arrive early or during school activities.

Remember the Rule - No Idling at School!

Other Things You Can Do

- Work with the school board and fleet managers to evaluate the feasibility of retrofitting some buses with pollution control equipment such as diesel oxidation catalysts or particulate filters.
- Consider using cleaner fuels if possible - biodiesel, ultra-low sulfur diesel, compressed natural gas or other alternative fuels.
- Replace the oldest buses with new ones that meet stringent pollution control standards. Pre-1990 buses pollute as much as six times more than new buses so they are excellent candidates for accelerated replacement. Besides stringent pollution controls, new buses offer enhanced safety, comfort, and maintenance features, as well as improved fuel efficiency.
- Inform parents, students and community groups about your efforts to reduce air pollution through newsletters and by working with school PTOs.

Let's all do our share
for clean air!



www.des.nh.gov

Please Turn
Engine Off
After Stopping



Thank You!

N.H. Department of Transportation
DES, School Transportation Division
is an equal opportunity employer

Sign for School Yards



DES Can Help

DES provides free information and materials (including "No Idling" signs and bus driver magnets) to school districts, fleet managers and bus drivers. DES staff is also available to speak with superintendents and school officials about the health issues related to diesel exhaust and ways to reduce its impact in and around school yards. To request "No Idling" signs and other program materials, or to learn more about this initiative, contact Kathy Brockett at 271-6284 or kbrockett@des.state.nh.us, or visit the DES website at www.des.nh.gov/ARD/MobileSources/SchoolBusInitiative.